

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DAMASC 00496 120902Z

12

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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O R 120840Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO AMEMBASSY CAIRO NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 2625

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 0496

EXDIS

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON FROM AMBASSADOR

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAID, SY, US

SUBJECT: SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM FOR SYRIA

REF: A. DAMASCUS 0325; B. DAMASCUS 0396

1. IN FEB 10 MEETING WITH FONMIN KHADDAM HAD FURTHER OPPORTUNITY REVIEW FACTS OF SCHOLARSHIP CASE. RE-ITERATED TO KHADDAM THAT 100 SCHOLARSHIPS WERE ENTIRELY USG FUNDED AND HAD BEEN IN PACKAGE SUBMITTED TO CONGRESS JAN 24. AFTER HE HAD INFORMED ME JAN 29 THAT SARG HAD DECIDED "DECLINE" THESE SCHOLARSHIPS, WE HAD NOT MADE AN ISSUE OF THIS WITH CONGRESS NOT WISHING TO DISTURB PROGRESS OF CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW OF WHOLE \$25 MILLION PACKAGE. KHADDAM NODDED AND REMARKED AMIABLY HE HAD HEARD I HAD DISCUSSED SCHOLARSHIP QUESTION WITH DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC AFFAIRS HAYDAR. I SAID FELT I OBLIGED TO DO SO SINCE HAYDAR HAS BEEN INTIMATELY INVOLVED IN DECIDING CATEGORIES OF SCHOLARSHIPS REQUIRED.

2. KHADDAM THEN SAID THAT ONLY OBJECTIONABLE FEATURE
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TO TRANSACTION HAD BEEN OUR CONSULTATIONS WITH ABU

DHABI WITHOUT DISCUSSING MATTER FIRST WITH SYRIANS.
HE THEN ADDED CRYPTICALLY, "NEVER MIND, IT IS FINISHED."

3. COMMENT: RECOMMEND THIS SUBJECT NOT BE RAISED BY
SECRETARY WITH KHADDAM. AM NOW INCLINED BELIEVE IT
WAS KHADDAM'S SENSE OF INJURED DIGNITY ALONE WHICH LED TO
REFUSAL OF PROGRAM AND THAT THERE NO EVIDENCE OTHERS IN
GOVERNMENT AND PARTY ARE MANEUVERING TO IMPEDE OUR AID EFFORTS.
I THINK KHADDAM IS IN PROCESS BACKING AWAY FROM EARLIER
"GOVERNMENT DECISION" TO REFUSE SCHOLARSHIPS, A DECISION
WHICH HE ENGINEERED WITH OR WITHOUT INVOLVING ASAD.
IN SUM, CONSIDER IT LIKELY SARG, WITH TACIT APPROVAL
OF THE FONMIN, WILL FIND WAY IN COMING WEEKS TO
TAKE ADVANTAGE OUR SCHOLARSHIPS.
MURPHY

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